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SUBJECT: POLISH ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN

Classified By: ECON COUNSELOR M. SESSUMS FOR REASONS 1.4(b,d)

11. (C) Summary: Plans are still being developed for a proposed Polish-Spanish-Emirati Agricultural Training School in Afghanistan. Poland's USD 1.3 million pledge at the Paris Support Conference will be used for a 2008 donation to the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund. The Poles remain keenly interested in U.S. PRT-training programs, such as courses at the National Defense University. They see 2008-2009 as a preparation period for moving into the Ghazni PRT. End summary.

Paris Conference Pledge

12. (C) On Aug. 8, EconOff discussed Polish assistance to Afghanistan with Ilona Korchut, Afghanistan officer in the MFA's Development Cooperation Department, and Marcin Urzyzanowski, who expects to become first secretary in the Polish Embassy in Kabul. At the Paris Support Conference for Afghanistan in June, Poland pledged USD 1.3 million. Korchut explained that this amount represents the Polish contribution to the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) in 2008. The Poles are in the process of deciding what to support with that donation.

13. (C) Korchut also noted that the MFA's Development Cooperation Department had passed funds to the Polish Defense Ministry for use in civil-military quick impact projects. At present, those funds have not been spent fully. If they are not spent by November, they will be returned to the MFA, in which case plans are to add them to Poland's donation to the ARTF donation. Thus, the Polish donation might wind up being slightly more than USD 1.3 million.

Agricultural Training School

14. (C) At the Paris Conference, Poland, Spain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced plans for an Agricultural Training School, with a national center in Kabul, a provincial center in Badghis Province (where the Spanish PRT is located) and the possibility of setting up other provincial centers. The total amount budgeted for the project is EUR 18 million (about USD 28 million). Korchut stated that Spain and the UAE are to provide the funding, while Poland will provide "technical assistance," such as agricultural experts. The project is still in the planning stage, and the Poles do not have a formal timeline for it. Polish Humanitarian Action, a well-regarded NGO, has been working with an agricultural school in Kabul, and the Polish government hopes to build on that foundation. Korchut understood that there is a similar existing school near the

Spanish PRT in Badghis Province.

15. (C) Korchut stated that the Spanish embassy in Kabul is coordinating with the Afghan Ministry of Agriculture. The three countries understand the need to coordinate their plans with those of the Afghan government. As far as Korchut knew, the project had not yet been discussed with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). If the project is successful, Poland, Spain and the UAE will try to bring in other countries. Korchut stated that, for now, Poland's Ambassador in Kabul would be the best local point-of-contact, as a slot in the Polish embassy for a development officer has not yet been filled.

Ghazni PRT

16. (C) The Poles see 2008-2009 as a preparation period for running the Ghazni PRT; they have already sent eight civilian experts to the PRT, and may send as many as 20. They are drawing up plans for projects to implement with U.S. and Polish funds. These experts were hired by the Polish Ministry of Defense, and many are former workers at NGOs. Korchut stated that the Poles plan to visit Spanish, British and American PRTs, and reiterated strong interest in U.S. training programs, such as those at the National Defense University.
QUANRUD